

Christianity and Crisis

A Bi-Weekly Journal of Christian Opinion

VOL. VIII, No. 10

JUNE 7, 1948

\$2.00 per year; 10 cents per copy

The Crisis in Negro Rights

THE maintenance of fundamental civil rights is of central importance to the democratic nations in their struggle against totalitarian regimes. A good performance in this respect is indispensable to the integrity of a society which professes to defend freedom; it is also crucial in the effort to secure the support of peoples to whom freedom is a myth or a mockery. Few aspects of American life have been more damaging to our prestige abroad than our treatment of certain minority groups.

Several recent proposals in the United States have precipitated crises in the field of civil liberties. Some of these proposals seek to extend the rights of racial minorities; others would place new limitations on political minorities. Issues having to do especially with Negro rights will be treated in the paragraphs that follow.

The War Between the States was not a wholly decisive engagement. That Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox is an historical fact; what he surrendered is still a matter under serious dispute. Regional battles have outlasted the war. The most recent engagement really began in September 1946 when a group of Negro leaders called on Mr. Truman and requested that steps be taken to guarantee the basic rights of Negroes and other minorities in America, for the sake of the nation's standing before the world as well as for the sake of the minorities. Mr. Truman's eventual reply was the appointment of the President's Committee on Civil Rights, which made its report in October 1947. In keeping with concrete recommendations of this Committee, Mr. Truman sent a Civil Rights Message to Congress on February 2, calling for Federal legislation against lynching, the poll tax, and discrimination in interstate transportation facilities; the establishment of new Federal machinery for the enforcement of civil rights, including a Fair Employment Practice Commission; and several other specific measures.

The reaction of Southern political leaders was immediate and almost unanimous, and has grown to such proportions that it is commonly referred to as a "revolt." A majority—though not all—of the Southern governors have joined in vociferous oppo-

sition to the President's program and have served notice on national leaders of the Democratic party that the South would be unalterably opposed to the renomination and reelection of Mr. Truman. Most of the Southern representatives in Congress have joined in a compact to fight all efforts at passage of the controversial legislation. The President has been charged with "playing politics" for Northern Negro votes (allegedly in an attempt to prevent them from going to Mr. Wallace), and with attempting to impose by legislation certain changes which can come—if at all—only through education. The usual denunciation of "outside interference" has been employed, and the traditional rebel yell of "states' rights" has been revived.

The outraged cries of the Southern politicians have been intended largely for home consumption, and have varied considerably according to the political exigencies of local campaigns. Powerful industrial interests, particularly those represented by the Southern States Industrial Council, have aided and abetted the politicians, linking together the proposal for a permanent F.E.P.C. and Mr. Truman's espousal of an increase in the minimum wage, and asking, "Can a free economy survive under such restraints and burdens? . . . The administration in Washington is filled with the proponents of collectivism." A few Southern voices—notably that of Lillian Smith—have been lifted against the tide, but most Southern liberals have maintained a discreet if uneasy silence. The opinion of Southern voters has swung sharply against Mr. Truman; according to Gallup polls, a 59% majority of Southern white voters approved last October of his performance as President, but by April a 57% majority had come to disapprove. The Civil Rights Program, as interpreted or misinterpreted, appears to have been the principal cause of disaffection; a Gallup poll in April revealed that 68% of the Southern white voters had heard or read of the President's proposals, and that 82% of these were opposed to their adoption.

The larger political effects of the controversy are still uncertain. It is clear that Mr. Truman's

chances for reelection have been damaged at least temporarily, and that most of the Southern delegates to the Democratic convention will oppose his renomination—though the omission of his proposals from the party platform may do a great deal to mollify the insurgents. Two or three Southern states may cast their electoral votes for an independent Democrat, preferably Southern. Despite threats, a widespread bolt from the Democratic party is unlikely, in view of the apparent alternatives this year.

At the level of local politics, the race-baiting politicians have received new strength for the time being. The day is coming—and probably soon—when it will be politically disastrous in most Southern states to raise the old race shibboleths. It has not yet arrived.

The perturbation of the South appears to have arisen more largely from a sense of outrage than from any real danger that the President's program would be adopted in the near future. Despite Republican pledges, no significant part of the program is likely to be enacted into law by the present Congress. In desperation, Senator Ferguson has proposed that the anti-lynching bill, hopelessly stalled in the committee, should be attached as a rider to the bill repealing a tax on oleomargarine—a bill heavily supported by the representatives from the Southern agricultural states. In case this strategy succeeds, the Southerners will be unable to have ropes and oleomargarine too.

In short, the Civil Rights Program has been defeated thus far by political demagoguery and legislative bickering. As the objective and thoughtful report of the President's Committee argued, there are good grounds for believing that such a program is not only essential but also enforceable. Decisions by the Supreme Court have effected notable changes in racial practices in the South as well as in the remainder of the nation, whether or not they have changed basic attitudes. If the CIO can enforce its rule against segregation effectively in the South, the Federal Government should be able to do so.

* * * * *

A threat of direct action on behalf of Negro rights was made recently by A. Philip Randolph before a Congressional committee. Mr. Randolph warned that there would be widespread non-violent resistance by Negroes to future induction into segregated military units. The reaction of the Congressional committee is reported to have ranged from surprise to shock. The reaction of the more vocal sections of the Negro community (and significant elements of the white community) has been one of general approval of Mr. Randolph's protest against segregation in the armed forces, mixed with the

hope that the very threat may get such results as to obviate the necessity of resort to resistance.

The legitimacy and timeliness of Mr. Randolph's protest are patent; the feasibility of a strategy of non-violent resistance is subject to serious question. The pacifist and the exponent of strict logical consistency may object to the use of the method of non-violence for getting into military service, non-segregated or otherwise. There are more pragmatic and important objections to this particular strategy. Many whites will interpret it, with considerable help, as an indication that the Negro wishes to be a Negro first and an American second—though the obvious fact is that the Negro desires only to be an American in the full sense of that term. In any event, the American situation does not lend itself to the employment of the technique of non-violent resistance in racial matters, except in restricted and specific local contexts. Only a minority of the American Negroes can be reached effectively by the great spiritual and social discipline required for successful use of the method. Even if they could be reached, the American situation is not like the Indian one, where great masses of the oppressed group could thwart the small clique of white rulers by their sheer weight. In this respect, the United States is more nearly like South Africa than like India: the Indian minority in South Africa, standing in about the same numerical proportion to the whites as do the Negroes in the United States, have used non-violent resistance with excellent discipline but without significant results—except, if anything, to tighten the restrictions on them.

Segregation in the armed services could be largely eliminated by an Executive Order of the President. In his Civil Rights message, Mr. Truman reported that he had "instructed the Secretary of Defense to take steps to have the remaining instances of discrimination in the Armed Services eliminated as rapidly as possible." Conferences on the question have subsequently been held with Negro leaders, but no decisive steps have been taken. Meanwhile, Southern congressmen are proposing legislation to guarantee the right of an individual to serve in segregated units, if he so desires.

Here again, national policy is confused by a split over racial questions that runs straight down the middle of America—and does not always coincide with Mason and Dixon's line. Inability to act decisively as a nation on such critical issues serves to deepen our internal racial crisis and to add to our embarrassment before the world. It also calls into serious question our devotion to democratic values, to anthropological facts, and to a faith which proclaims that "God hath made of one blood all nations of men."

L. P.

Gandhi's Challenge to Christianity

PAUL DAVID DEVANANDAN

CHRISTIANS everywhere, and Christians in India in particular, share the loss that the world has sustained in the passing of Mahatma Gandhi. No world-leader of contemporary history has borne more telling testimony to that "true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." He died, as he lived, challenging the faith by which we Christians live, the faith in which we too hope to conquer death.

Many eager enthusiasts bring the issue to a point by asserting that the Mahatma was one of the greatest Christians the world has produced. If he was a greater Christian than most Christians, Gandhi's own explanation would be in the fact that he was, in a sense, a greater Hindu than most Hindus. Just there comes the home thrust. Where then is the need for good non-Christians to become bad Christians when they could actually be better Christians as they are? Has not Gandhi proved beyond cavil that the misplaced Christian zeal of the evangelist to convert a heathen world is really due to a misunderstanding of the true mission of the church, which is to help Hindus be better Hindus, Moslems be better Moslems, and so forth?

II

When people, Christian and non-Christian, refer to Gandhi as a great Christian, what do they mean? The Mahatma himself is reported to have said once, "If you call me a Christian, I shall consider it an insult. But if you say that I am Christ-like I shall consider it the greatest compliment you can pay me." "Religion, not in the conventional but in the broadest sense," he said on another occasion, "helps me to have a glimpse of the divine essence. This glimpse is impossible without full development of the moral sense. Hence religion and morality are, for me, synonymous terms."

This understanding of religion as a "way of life" (*marga*) which leads to mystic apprehension, "glimpse of the divine essence" (*darsana*) is more fully described in the Mahatma's answer to Sir S. Radhakrishnan's question, "What is your religion?" "My religion is Hinduism," is the answer, "which for me is Religion of humanity, and includes the best of all religions known to me. . . . I am being led to my religion through Truth and Non-violence which is love in the broadest sense."

Fundamental to Gandhi's view of religion would seem to be, then, the good life based on supreme regard for humanity and the unwearied application of the principle of love in all social relations (*ahimsa*), through selfless simplicity (*khaddar*) and service for the oppressed (*harijan sevak*), inspired by unswerv-

ing devotion to a God of Truth and Righteousness (*satyagraha*).

"The bearing of this (my) religion on social life," Gandhi goes on to add, "is or has to be seen in one's daily social contact. To be true to such religion one has to lose oneself in continuous and continuing service of all life. . . . Hence, for me, there is no escape from social service, there is no happiness beyond or apart from it."

Whether or not this faith can be rightly described as Hindu, there is certainly pronounced affinity between it and the way of life based on the twin-imperatives of the religious ethic of Jesus, which to most people, Christian and non-Christian, is the sum and substance of Christianity. The popular claim that Gandhi is a Christian is not difficult to understand. Nor does this explanation minimize his true greatness. It lies in that obvious sincerity which sought to translate into action the ethic of love, and in the remarkable success which he achieved in his own personal life in measuring up to the high demands of its discipline.

Indeed, the Mahatma was more Christian than most of us in this one respect, that he was faithful and fearless in his response to the inner constraint of the law of love. The Church of South India rightly expressed the tribute of the entire Christian world in a recent official statement which reads: "The Church thanks God for the gift to India and to the world of a child of His who held aloft, with unflinching courage and unswerving faith, the banner of peace, and who proclaimed unflinchingly the might of sacrificial love and efficacy of turning the other cheek as a method of meeting and overcoming the forces of mistrust and hatred which are so tragically rampant in the world. The Church rejoices in the thought that it has been given to India to apply the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount to the healing of the grievous maladies which afflict national and international life and that the spiritual insight of one great soul, Mahatma Gandhi, has set an example for mankind to follow."

III

The Mahatma himself would want history to regard him as the greatest Hindu that the world has seen of recent times. And it is as such that he would want the Christian church to meet his challenge. Many ask in genuine puzzlement, "Was the Mahatma a Hindu, whatever he may say to the contrary?" In his later life Gandhi took special care to impress upon people that he believed in observing many of the rites and ceremonies of Vaishnavite Hinduism. The world was powerfully reminded of

this by the elaborate funeral obsequies of the Mahatma. Would he himself have wished them otherwise? Simpler, certainly; but not less *shastric* (based on the Hindu scriptures). For we are told that he insisted on these observances at the cremation of his wife not so very long ago.

His faith was Hinduism *plus*: basically Hindu, with elements of what he regarded as valuable in other faiths added on. In a message he sent to the Federation of International Fellowships Gandhi stated, "After long study and experience, I have come to these conclusions: (1) all religions are true; (2) all religions have some error in them; (3) all religions are almost as dear to me as my own Hinduism. My veneration for other faiths is the same as for my own faith. Consequently the thought of conversion is impossible . . . our prayers for others ought never to be, 'God, give them the light thou hast given to me,' but 'God, give them all the light and truth they need for their highest development.'"

Western admirers of Gandhi do not seem to realize that in this confession of faith, the Mahatma has expressed the essence of Hinduism, the traditional Hindu conception of religion. It is not, as some maintain, a "modern version of Hinduism." After all, the entire history of what are described as modern religious movements in Hindu India, since the days of Ram Mohun Roy to those of Mohanlal Gandhi, is a record not so much of reform and reconstruction (as well they may be) as an attempt to define the essential affirmations of that complex religious culture which is known as Hinduism, challenged in a modern world to state where it differed from other religions.

Further reflection on the basic assumptions of the Hindu view of religion, which brings into neat creedal pattern an alluring theological agnosticism, an attractive religious latitudinarianism, a challenging ethical pragmatism and a compelling spiritual individualism, reveals the startling truth that these are indeed the cornerstones of the edifice of religious liberalism. For the religious liberal (the term being used in its accepted European sense) everywhere holds to the view that (1) God is essentially "unknowable"; (2) all religions are partly true and partly false, no one being wholly true; (3) religions are "ways of life," being synonymous with morality; and (4) therefore every man should follow his own "way of life" to the best of his own light, profiting by the "truths" in all religions.

Gandhi's challenge to Christianity is the challenge of religious liberalism to the Christian Gospel. Prof. J. C. Archer of Yale University speaks the same thought as Gandhi when he writes,¹ "The problem

of the final status of all the world's religions and of their relationship to one another still awaits solution, and a force is somehow working towards that end. The religions must recognize this and work together on the solution. . . . Not only must all the great religions work together, but each one also must be loyal to itself as a basis of association. . . . There is no need of any compromise that destroys sincere, concrete convictions on the part of educated men, and co-operation in religion must be learned by education, whereas sectarian hostility has been learned by 'revelation.' In the providence of God, 'God-fearing' men, earnest, able, intelligent, and devoted followers of the great religions, can find, if they will, a ground of mutual confidence and enterprise that is bound to yield at large the common good. . . . Each man will cherish what there is of final worth in his own inheritance, but will assume likewise the office of ambassador, an ambassador of reconciliation among the world's religions, recommending even by his own example everywhere the general practice of 'whatsoever things are true, to be revered, just, pure, lovely and gracious.'"

IV

However world-Christianity may regard the challenge of Mahatma Gandhi, to Indian Christianity it comes with a new urgency, now that he has passed away and his influence has become a real force in shaping the religious life of Hindu India. John Clark Archer, representing one type of American Christianity, would seem to suggest that we take Gandhi seriously and rest content with preaching the Gospel so that it helps Hindus be better Hindus, and Moslems better Moslems. Reinhold Niebuhr,² representing another type of American Christianity, would not want us to take Gandhi seriously at all, because his pacifism, far from being derived from the Sermon on the Mount, was really an "instrument of political policy." Condemning Gandhian non-violence as "foreign to the Western world" and as not to be "fitted into our Western spirituality," Niebuhr categorically declares with his characteristic forthrightness, "The doctrine of non-violence was taken not from the Sermon on the Mount in the first instance but from Jainism. But in Jainism it is a fantastically negative doctrine. It requires that no harm be done to any living creature, including the most insignificant or the most noxious insect. Gandhi transfigured this negative doctrine into a positive instrument of political power."

To us in Christian India, Gandhi's challenge is that "we show forth God's praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives; by giving up ourselves to His service, and by walking before Him in holiness and

¹ J. C. Archer, "The Wind Bloweth Where It Listeth," *Review of Religion*, Nov., 1947, p. 34.

² Religious News Press release, 1948.

righteousness all our days": setting forth in the testimony of a life what we claim to be true in our profession. Is not Christianity also a personal religion of self-commitment to the Lord of Life?

Christianity is *also* a way of life which certainly ought to fit into our Eastern spirituality (whatever the Western version of it), translating in terms of actual living, in as far as it is humanly possible, the stern demands that the twin-imperative of the Law of Love makes upon our every-day relations with our fellow men. Our Lord's imperious "Follow Me!" is still the charter of true Christian discipleship. Christians, in India at any rate, have a special vocation (Eastern spirituality again!) of demonstrating the costliness of the Christian *dharma*, the price one is willing to pay in terms of suffering cheerfully borne in fulfilling Christ's command to be "perfect even as the Father in heaven is perfect," showing in their lives the righteousness that is more than the righteousness of the very best in contemporary life.

Again, we need to bring to the forefront of our living faith the Christian law of life that in dying we live, that in losing we gain, that the abolition of death is only possible by the scandal of the Cross. "Except the corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; but he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." Such fearlessness (*abhaya*) which alone can give our modern world that sense of security for which it craves is bought at the price of sacrificing what at the time we consider as contributing most to our safety.

Not least, we Christians in India need seriously to take to heart the new meaning-content Gandhi put into the Hindu doctrine of *ahimsa*. Niebuhr is right when he says that "Gandhi transfigured this negative doctrine into a positive instrument," but not "of political power": that is to disproportionately exaggerate one use he did put it to, and to deny the use of that very weapon to stab awake the conscience of the Hindu to inherent worthfulness of the fellow man in the out-caste and the low-caste. The challenge of Gandhi to us Christian Indians is to prove the claim that if we are truly the children of God (*harijan*) it is by faith in Christ Jesus, that with us "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for we are all one in Christ Jesus."

V

Does this mean that Gandhi has proved the futility of proclaiming the Gospel to Hindu India? On the contrary, the Mahatma himself would freely admit that he would not have been the "better Hindu" that he was, had it not been for the influence of the person and teachings of Jesus. He would not want us in India to give up our evangelism: he would want us to be faithful in our profession of the

evangel. But what he would object to, and all along took serious objection to, is the "proselytizing activities of the Christian Missions."

Leaving aside the political considerations which influenced him in taking this stand, Gandhi had very definite personal convictions in the matter. Chief among them was his firm belief that the ethical values of Christianity can well be accepted by any Hindu without his becoming a Christian. Years ago when K. T. Paul, the then YMCA leader in India, was organizing a team of Christian workers for relief work in a riot-riddled area in South India, Gandhi sent him a telegram which read, "Pray help Moslems and Hindus be Christians to one another."

Is not this "larger evangelism," to borrow a phrase from John R. Mott, also a Christian responsibility? At any rate in the immediate years to come there is need in India to stress this wider approach, seeking to establish in the social relationships of all men the Christian standards of conduct. There can be no more fruitful preparation of the ground for the seed of the Gospel than this fertilizing through the spread of Christian culture, in the deeper sense of that term. As a preparation for, but not as the Gospel.

Gandhi rejects the Gospel just because it will not fit into the creedal pattern of the Hindu dogmas that we have referred to in a previous section. That Gospel to the Christian stands for: (1) the claim that God has revealed Himself unto the world in Christ Jesus: He is not incomprehensible; (2) the relative validity of religions is not based on rational considerations alone, because the root-trouble with man is an inherent defect of will which he is helpless by his own effort to set right; (3) the "good life" is, therefore, not possible unless man recognizes that God Himself is still at work in this world, perfecting His creation, and in that realization man seeks to co-operate with God's "redemptive movement in history"; (4) this is no solitary, individualistic effort, then, of man seeking the goal of perfection, but a "societarian" undertaking of a community of "persons" in the fellowship of the church of Christ carrying forward the work of God to make this world His Kingdom.

VI

Can this Christian view of life be reconciled with the Hindu understanding of religion? Whatever Prof. J. C. Archer for the Christian liberal and Mahatma Gandhi for the Hindu liberal may hold to the contrary, they will have to concede that their proposed strategy for the future of Christian Missions in India is impossible unless the Christian is willing to give up proclaiming the Gospel which is the "core of adamant" in his faith. It is too costly a price for the believing Christian to pay even for peace and goodwill among mankind.

Besides, neither of them has definitely proved that the church has no future in India. Certainly it may be true that the number of converts from higher Hinduism is comparatively few, that the opposition to the large number of low-caste and out-caste Hindus joining the church is growing, that a nationalist government may introduce legislative measures to make it difficult for the Christian evangelist to preach the Gospel, but they do not, in themselves, provide sufficient justification for the church to withdraw from the field of evangelism.

The church has not counted its gains in terms of success as it is ordinarily understood. Indeed the church, in her long history, has wavered in her divine mission whenever she has succumbed to the temptation of calculating her advance in terms of success as we humans understand it. Men like Gandhi do not appear in history to persuade us to tone down the difference between the Way and the ways: they set the Christian to the task which John Baillie has pointedly drawn to our attention. "The bit of the road," writes Dr. Baillie,^a "that most requires to be illuminated is the point where it forks. If we could only discover just why it is that, when a certain stage is reached we take different turnings and begin to walk apart, we should perhaps be doing all that we can humanly do. The rest is not in our hands, but in the hands of Some Thing or Some One not ourselves; for faith is not an achievement but a gift. . . . If the final issue is in other hands, I am sure it is in much better hands, and that all will be well in the end if only we play valiantly the small part that is alone open to us."

Gandhi's challenge to the Church in India and everywhere is that we preach "not ourselves, but Christ and Him crucified," that we emphasize in our corporate testimony just those affirmations of faith which liberalism—Hindu as well as Christian—would want us to suppress for the sake of world-peace and international understanding. Such advocates of religious expediency fail to see that the very affirmations of faith which constitute their creed are capable of dangerous distortion resulting in a vicious ideology. For it is possible to proceed from the creedal pattern of the liberal dogma to maintain that (1) there is no God; (2) all religions are false; (3) what they call religion is really a way of life which makes possible the highest welfare of the bulk of mankind now suppressed by a vicious economic order; (4) this hope cannot be realized by individuals doing their best according to their own light, but by a totalitarian order of society which shall enforce the new ideal through the State.

Signs are already in the air in Hindu India that this shift of emphasis is well on its way in the minds of many young people who, affirming the traditional

dogma of their ancestral Hinduism, began their pilgrimage of faith. Leaders of the Hindu renaissance are becoming increasingly aware of this possible landslide. Far from drifting with the wind which bloweth where it listeth, the church must brace herself afresh to the "foolishness of preaching. . . . Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

Bishop Dibelius Asks Germans to Fight Tyranny

A forthright appeal to "those who hold power in our fatherland" not to force individuals to act against their convictions and conscience has been made by Dr. Otto Dibelius, Evangelical Bishop of Berlin in a pastoral letter read in all churches of the Berlin-Brandenburg province on Pentecost Sunday. The letter stressed that "in the times we live in one thing is paramount, that, whatever happens, we must preserve the freedom to remain a truthful people."

"Let us take up the battle against any pressure put on our convictions and conscience," Bishop Dibelius wrote. "It is true that we should obey the directions of the authorities in the external things of life as long as nothing is demanded of us that is against God's commands. But where it is a question of showing inner convictions—at elections, public demonstrations, the decision to join a political party, at referendums and similar occasions—it is not a question of being obedient, but of showing one's own conscientious convictions."

The bishop warned that "wherever a state claims for itself total power, it shows the sinister tendency to force people to become untruthful. This we all remember from the days of National Socialism. Millions were forced at that time by threats and intimidation to profess a belief which they detested. They were told to stick flags in their windows while their hearts were full of bitterness, and were ordered to show indignation about something which to them seemed right and good."

Recalling other conditions during the Nazi regime, Bishop Dibelius added:

"The teachers in schools were ordered to say things which the children knew the teachers themselves did not believe. The newspapers were told what they should write, and judges were supposed to pronounce sentences they felt to be utterly unjust. Public demonstrations were forced to be held without consideration of the true opinion of the people, and these demonstrations were afterwards announced to the world as the free expressions of the people's will."

Declaring that under National Socialism, the life of the people was "poisoned by general mendacities" which undermined morale and destroyed the spirit of genuine community. Bishop Dibelius warned: "Such times must never return. We as Christians are responsible that they do not return."

R. N. S.

^a John Baillie, "Invitation to Pilgrimage," p. 8.

The World Church: News and Notes

Hungary: Reformed Church Behind the "Iron Curtain"

Professor Karl Barth has recently visited the Hungarian Reformed Church and his impressions were published in the "Kirchenblatt für die reformierte Schweiz" (April 29, 1948). We quote some of the essential points.

"The main impression which I have brought back from Hungary is one of enlightenment and encouragement, but also a sense of shame. Of course, I am not referring to the political conditions which I saw there: there is hardly need to say that they were not nice, and no one expected me to call them nice. More important than that was the positive impression which I received, when I was in Hungary, of the spiritual and practical attitude and work of the Reformed Protestants in Hungary, who without having had any voice in the situation, have to put up with those conditions together with the whole country. (The Reformed Protestants are the 20% of the population).

"That does not mean that the Reformed Church of Hungary would acknowledge the state-system which is now in control there. If it did so, the Reformed Church would be in a more favorable position than the Roman Church. The Government has sent the Reformed Church several attractive invitations to do this, but it has not answered. The Reformed Church has expressed its sincere approval of certain measures passed by the new Government, especially of the new land-reform law, which affects the Church considerably. But it reserves the right to disapprove of certain other measures introduced by this State, if the case arises. I did not meet anyone in the Reformed Church who gave full allegiance and confidence to the new system. The childish enthusiasm of the fiery red Dean of Canterbury—who had visited Hungary shortly before I did—only aroused their amazement. The Reformed Church is in danger of not complying with the demands of the ruling to make a decision—which would mean a decision in favor of that party. . . .

"The Reformed Church is also resisting the even closer and stronger temptation to join the Roman Catholics in forming a definite opposition. By doing so it could win many friends also. It cannot be easy for the Reformed Church to hear the reproaches of some of its members, that it is 'lukewarm' and that the only real Calvinist in Hungary today is the Roman Catholic Archbishop. . . . My impression of the Hungarian Reformed Protestants was that they would not remain silent when they ought to speak. But they see too clearly the mistakes made in the past, to rush to the opposite extreme now. And from the social side they are open to reject Communism altogether. They realize the weaknesses of the West only too well, and do not wish to be forced, by choosing this second possibility, into becoming partisans of western political ideas. . . .

"What carried conviction for me was this: that the Hungarian Reformed Protestants were not preoccupied with all the undecided questions of East versus West, nor with the memory of the Russian horrors, nor with the question of the justice or injustice of their present

government; they are concentrating on their own positive task as a Church. They are trying to formulate the Word of God in fresh terms (which involves fundamental reconsideration on the theological side). And they are endeavoring to carry that message to the members of the Reformed Church themselves, first and foremost, as the first step towards all further work and towards determining their future attitude. . . ."

E. P. S., Geneva.

German Parishes Are Building Cottages

In the midst of distress pressing heavily upon the German people the Evangelical Church of Westphalia has started a social relief-work for refugees. One of the leading personalities of the Confessing Church during the church struggle under the Nazi rule, now the speaker of the Evangelical Church in the British Zone, Präses Koch, D.D., has made an appeal to all parishes to build at least one settler's house for a refugee's family in all communities in the course of this year, if possible.

It is the immense misery particularly in the Ruhr district that has induced the church to start this action. There are more than one million refugees in that area. In Westphalia one of every six inhabitants is a refugee. About one-half of the lodgings available before the war are destroyed now, thus innumerable people being compelled to live in ruins and cellars in a very inadequate and inhuman manner. The immense extent of distress makes it impossible for the State authorities alone to render the refugees the necessary help. Therefore the church feels itself commissioned to damn, by an act of exemplary charity, the psychological inactivity and resignation paralyzing all activity in Germany.

The houses projected are to be constructed by means of self-help and neighborhood-help. The site for house-building and garden is to be placed at the disposal of the settlers by the parish. The church authority appeals to the parishioners for making a present of building materials and for aiding the refugees in the erection of their homes by joint cooperation.

In performing this action the church is continuing a social settling-work started by "Father" Bodelschwingh, the founder of Bethel, some decades ago. A grandson of Bodelschwingh who is now the manager of the housing society "Heimstätte" (Homestead) will advise the parishes in scheming and erecting the houses for refugees.

Evangelischer Pressedienst.

"The Condition of the Protestants in Spain": A Catholic View

Father F. Cavalli, S.J., has written for the Italian Jesuit review "La Civiltà Cattolica" (April 3, 1948) an article entitled "The Condition of the Protestants in Spain," from which we quote the following extracts:

"The Catholic Church, being convinced, by reason of her divine prerogatives, that she is the one true Church, claims for herself alone the right to freedom, for this right may only be possessed by truth, and

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A Bi-Weekly Journal of Christian Opinion
537 West 121st St., New York 27, N. Y.

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never by error. Where the other religions are concerned, she will not take up the sword against them, but she will ask that, by lawful means worthy of the human creature, they shall not be allowed to propagate false doctrines. Consequently, in a State where the majority of the people are Catholic, the Church asks that error shall not be accorded a legal existence, and that if religious minorities exist they shall have a *de facto* existence only, not the opportunity of spreading their beliefs. Where material circumstances—whether the hostility of a Government or the numerical strength of the Dissenting factions—do not allow of this principle's being applied in its entirety, the Church requires that she shall have all possible concessions, confining herself to accepting as the least of all evils the *de jure* toleration of other forms of worship. In other countries, the Catholics are obliged themselves to ask for full liberty for all, resigning themselves to living together where they alone had the right to live. The Church does not in this way give up her theses, which remain the most imperative of all laws, but adapts herself to the hypothesis, which must be taken into account on the material plane. Hence extreme horror on the part of the Protestants, who hold it up against the Catholics that they withhold freedom, indeed *de facto* toleration, from others when they are in the ma-

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jority, and on the other hand demand it as a right when they are in the minority . . .

"The Catholic Church would be betraying her mission if she were to proclaim, either in theory or in practice, that error can have the same rights as truth, especially when the highest duties and interests of man are at stake. The Church can feel no shame at her intransigence as she asserts it in principle and carries it out in practice, though the Areopagus of the nations of today may smile pityingly or rage against it as tyrannical . . ."

E. P. S., Geneva.

Japan: National Christian Council Reestablished

The National Christian Council of Japan, which ceased to function shortly before the war, has been reorganized under the chairmanship of the Rev. Michio Kozaki, moderator of the United Church of Christ in Japan. Formal establishment of the group took place at a conference attended by Japanese Protestant churchmen and American missionary leaders.

The Council, it was announced, will comprise both church bodies and non-ecclesiastical organizations which "believe in the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, as set forth in the Holy Bible."

Already affiliated with the Council are the United Church of Christ in Japan, the Holy Catholic Church in Japan (Anglican), the Church of the Nazarene, and Lutheran and Baptist Churches. Non-church groups in the Council are the Christian Education Association, the YMCA, the YWCA, and the Women's Christian Temperance Union.

R. N. S.

Expects Polish Church to Reestablish Relations With Russians

Reestablishment of relations between the Orthodox Church of Poland and the Russian Orthodox Church was predicted in Warsaw by Archbishop Timoteus Szretter. Relations between the two Churches were broken more than 30 years ago.

Archbishop Timoteus was placed in temporary charge of the Polish Church following the recent ouster by government decree of Metropolitan Dionisus as supreme head of the Church, reputedly on the ground that he collaborated with the Germans during the Nazi occupation.

Interviewed by Religious News Service, Archbishop Timoteus emphasized that although closer relations may be reestablished with the Russian Church, the Orthodox Church in Poland is at the same time "determined to retain its *autocephalic* character and to recognize the spiritual supremacy of the Ecumenical Patriarch in Istanbul rather than that of the Russian Patriarch."

J. Cang, R. N. S. Correspondent.

Author in This Issue

Paul David Devanandan was The Henry W. Luce Visiting Professor of World Christianity at Union Theological Seminary for the past year. He is Professor of Philosophy and History of Religions at the United Theological College, Bangalore, South India.